

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-104 are pending in the application. Claims 1-72 were withdrawn pursuant to an election requirement. Claims 73 and 87 have been amended to add further description; support for these changes is found in the specification, for example, in paragraph [0013] of the specification. Thus, Claims 73-104 are presented for examination.

REMARKS

Applicant's attorney acknowledges with thanks the telephone conference with Examiner Sweet on November 10, 2009, during which the amendments made to Claims 73 and 87 as noted above were discussed. Applicant's attorney further acknowledges with thanks the voice mail left for the attorney on November 16, 2009, in which the Examiner agreed that the above change regarding "extruded" would distinguish over the current references but would require an additional search.

Thus, the current Claims as amended would be patentable over Modak et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,224,579) ("MODAK"); Schwarz et al. (U.S. Publication No. 2001/0022988) ("SCHWARZ"); and Buscemi et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,693,034) ("BUSCEMI").

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that Claims 73-104 are in condition for allowance, early notification of which is earnestly solicited. It is believed that this Response is being submitted in time for an Advisory Action should the Examiner require further changes to the Claims. Should the Examiner be of the view that an interview would expedite consideration of this Response or of the application at large, the Examiner is requested to telephone the Applicant's attorney at the number listed below in order to resolve any outstanding issues in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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